



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

IN REPLYING, ADDRESS THE
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

REFER TO:

APR 5 1954

Dear Congressman Fogarty:

In your letter of March 25, 1954, you asked for some comments on an editorial entitled, "Mental Health Crisis: There is a Way Out".

There is growing interest in providing 1) better treatment services in mental hospitals, 2) services that will reduce the number of admissions to mental hospitals, and 3) aftercare services to minimize hospital readmissions. The editorial recognizes that there is a need for appropriate physical facilities, for improved treatment services that will shorten the length of hospital stay, and for clinic services. This editorial points out that some people have become too preoccupied with providing additional buildings and not enough interested in improving the treatment services in the hospitals and in the communities. Additional physical facilities are not, as the editorial points out, "the only answer". However, it may be that there is a real need for additional physical facilities and also a real need for improved staff and treatment in the hospitals and improved clinic facilities in the communities.

One might get the impression that the number of admissions to mental hospitals would be reduced considerably by having community psychiatric clinics. The majority of patients treated in community clinics have mental disorders of a different type and usually less incapacitating than those that require hospital treatment. There are some patients who would have to be admitted to a hospital if clinic services were not available in the community. One study has indicated that 5 percent of the patients treated in a community clinic would have required hospitalization if clinic treatment had not been available. It was estimated that the savings that resulted from not having to hospitalize these patients were almost enough to pay the entire cost of the clinic.

I thought you might be interested in having a copy of "A Ten Point Program of the National Governors' Conference on Mental Health"; a copy of this is attached.

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I hope that these comments will be of some use to you.
Please call upon me for any additional help that you desire.

Sincerely yours,

Leonard
Surgeon General

(A. Scheide)

Hon. John E. Fogarty
House of Representatives
Washington 25, D. C.

Enclosures